

O P 130145Z OCT 96
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY
AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DHAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 214855

LONDON FOR TUELLER, PARIS FOR RAVELING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/06

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SA](#) [AF](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: ENGAGING THE SAUDIS ON THE TALIBAN

ROME FOR DEMPSEY; MOSCOW PLS PASS TO INR A/S GATI

REFS: A) STATE 204146 (NOTAL) B) STATE 204251 (NOTAL)
C) STATE 203329 (NOTAL) D. ISLAMABAD 8520 (NOTAL)
E) RIYADH 4122

¶1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY ROBIN L. RAPHEL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS, DOS. REASON: 1.5(D).

¶2. (C) GID DIRECTOR PRINCE TURKI RECENTLY HELD MEETINGS IN
WASHINGTON WITH THE NSC AND CIA AT WHICH HE DISCUSSED,
AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS, THE TALIBAN PHENOMENON, AND EXCHANGED
ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENTS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT. THE DEPARTMENT
IS VERY INTERESTED IN ENGAGING REGULARLY WITH THE SAUDIS ON
THEIR POLICY TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN.

¶3. (C) EMBASSY RIYADH IS REQUESTED TO INITIATE PERIODIC
HIGH-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SAUDIS SO WE CAN GET A
BETTER ASSESS THEIR VIEWS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE
SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND OF THEIR CONTACTS OR INFLUENCE
WITH THE TALIBAN. WE WANT TO ASK THE SAUDIS TO ENGAGE WITH
THE TALIBAN CONSTRUCTIVELY ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO US SUCH
AS TERRORISM--CLOSING THE MILITANT TRAINING CAMPS AND
EXPELLING OSAMA BIN LADEN.

¶4. (C) WE ALSO WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE SAUDIS TO USE
WHATEVER INFLUENCE THEY MAY HAVE WITH THE TALIBAN TO PRESS
THEM TO STOP THE FIGHTING IN THE NORTH AND TO REACH A
POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WITH MASOOD AND DOSTAM TOWARDS
BUILDING A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.
CONTINUING THE FIGHTING IS DESTABILIZING TO THE REGION AND
RISKS AN ETHNIC DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY. THE RUSSIANS AND
THE CENTRAL ASIANS HAVE ALL REACTED STRONGLY TO THE
PERCEIVED TALIBAN THREAT. POST SHOULD INQUIRE AS TO SAUDI
PLANS TO ENGAGE WITH THE TALIBAN AUTHORITIES IN KABUL.
POST MAY WISH TO DRAW ON GENERAL TALKING POINTS TO BE SENT
BY SEPTEL, PREVIOUS GUIDANCE IN REFS A AND B AND THEN FOCUS
ON THE SUGGESTED POINTS BELOW.

¶5. (C) SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

RUSSIAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN CONCERNS

-- THE RUSSIANS AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES HAVE ALL
CONVEYED TO US THEIR CONCERNS OVER THE TAKEOVER OF KABUL BY
THE TALIBAN AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF TALIBAN RULE IN
AFGHANISTAN FOR REGIONAL STABILITY.

-- THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE MOVES NORTHWARD,
PARTICULARLY TOWARD THE TAJIK BORDER. IN RESPONSE,

PRESIDENT YELTSIN CALLED A SUMMIT OF THE CIS STATES THAT WAS HELD IN ALMATY OCTOBER 4-5.

-- THE SUMMIT CALLED ON THE AFGHAN RIVAL PARTIES TO STOP THE FIGHTING AND TO NEGOTIATE. THE CIS LEADERS WARNED THAT THEY WILL TAKE MEASURES TO REINFORCE THEIR BORDERS, AND THEY RESERVED THE RIGHT TO "TAKE ADEQUATE MEASURES" SHOULD AFGHANISTAN'S HOSTILITIES SPILL OVER THE BORDER.

URGE AN END TO THE FIGHTING

-- WE RECENTLY SPOKE WITH A TALIBAN REPRESENTATIVE IN ISLAMABAD. WE URGED THE TALIBAN IMMEDIATELY TO REACH A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WITH BOTH DOSTAM AND MASOOD.

-- WE ARGUED THAT AN EXPANSION OF THE FIGHTING INTO NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN WOULD COMPOUND THE ANXIETIES OF AFGHANISTAN'S NORTHERN NEIGHBORS WHO ALREADY PERCEIVE THE TALIBAN TO BE A THREAT TO THEIR STABILITY AND WAY OF LIFE.

-- WE ALSO WARNED THAT CONTINUED FIGHTING COULD PRECIPITATE AN UNWANTED INTERVENTION BY RUSSIA, IRAN, OR SOME OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF EITHER THE TALIBAN OR AFGHANISTAN AS A WHOLE.

-- THE TALIBAN REPRESENTATIVE'S RESPONSE WAS THAT THE TALL BAN HAVE "NO PROBLEM" WITH EITHER DOS TAM OR THE AFGHAN TAJIKS. HOWEVER, THEY DO NOT TRUST MASOOD AND INSISTED HE WOULD HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH. DOSTAM WOULD NEED TO DISARM HIS FORCES AS PART OF A DEAL WITH THE TALIBAN. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE TALIBAN ARE NOT PLANNING TO PUT ?RESSURE ON THE HAZARA SHIAS.

-- THIS RESPONSE IS LESS THAN REASSURING TO US AND OTHERS WHO FEAR THE SPREAD OF GREATER INSTABILITY IN THE REGION AND WHO BELIEVE THAT A MILITARY SOLUTION IS NOT A LONG TERM SOLUTION FOR AFGHANISTAN.

-- WE ASK THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT USE WHATEVER INFLUENCE IT HAS WITH THE TALL BAN TO STRESS THAT CONTINUED FIGHTING INVITES GREATER INSTABILITY, POSSIBLE ACTIVE INTERVENTION BY FOREIGN POWERS AND RISKS AN ETHNIC DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY.

TERRORISM

-- WE ALSO SEEK YOUR GOVERNMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN ENCOURAGING THE TALIBAN TO CLOSE TERRORIST/MILITANT TRAINING CAMPS IN TERRITORY THEY CONTROL AND TO EXPEL NON-AFGHANS INVOLVED IN SUCH ACTIVITIES.

-- WE HAVE HEARD CONFLICTING REPORTS ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF OSAMA BIN LADEN. HE MIGHT STILL BE IN TALIBAN-CONTROLLED TERRITORY. WE HAVE CONVEYED TO THE TALIBAN AND OTHER AFGHAN LEADERS THAT THE PRESENCE OF OSAMA BIN LADEN IS NOT HELPFUL TO AFGHANISTAN.

FORMER KING ZAHIR SHAH

-- ON ONE FINAL MATTER REGARDING FORMER KING ZAHIR SHAH, WE WISH TO CLARIFY OUR POSITION ON HIS POSSIBLE RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN. WE DO NOT OPPOSE HIS DESIRE TO RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN TO HELP REUNIFY THE COUNTRY.

-- IN FACT, WE WOULD NOT OPPOSE THE EFFORTS OF ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO COULD BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL AFGHANISTAN UNDER A STABLE, REPRESENTATIVE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

TALBOTT